

information management

**Fourth report on the activities of the
Committee for Information and
Documentation on Science and Technology
of the European Communities
(1978-80)**

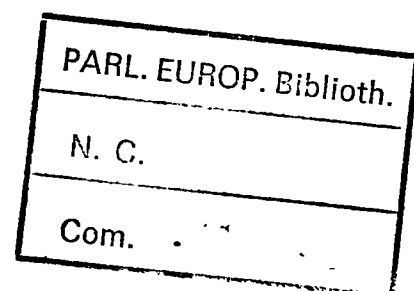
Report

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Fourth report on the activities of the Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology of the European Communities (1978-80)

Directorate-General
Information Market and Innovation



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FOURTH REPORT ON THE ACTIVITIES OF THE COMMITTEE FOR
INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (1)

1978 - 1980

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology (CIDST) came into being as a result of a Council of Ministers' resolution of 24 June 1971 (2), which laid down the basis for Community cooperation for the promotion of social, economic, scientific and technical progress through the gradual establishment of a European documentation and information network.
- 1.2. With this aim in view, a first three-year plan of action (1975-77) was adopted by the Council of Ministers (3) and provided the foundation for further action in the form of a second three-year plan of action (1978-80). This report describes the Committee's activities during the second plan of action.
- 1.3. The Committee is composed of persons responsible for drawing up policy on scientific and technical information and documentation (STID) in each of the Member States. Its membership for the period covered is listed in Appendix I.

Observers from Greece participated, for the first time, at the October 1980 meeting.

Statistics on the Committee's meetings during this period may be found in Appendix II.

(1) Earlier reports were published as EUR 5177, EUR 5597 and EUR 6158 respectively (all in DA, DE, EN, FR, IT, NL) and are obtainable through the Sales Offices listed at the back of this report.

(2) Official Journal C 122 of 10 December 1971.

(3) Official Journal L 100 of 21 April 1975.

2. Second three-year plan of action in the field of scientific and technical information and documentation (1978-80)

In March 1978, the European Parliament gave a favourable opinion on the plan drawn up in 1976/77 and proposed by the Commission with CIDST's and CREST's advice (4), recommending at the same time certain improvements in some areas. Following these modifications, the Council examined the plan and finally adopted a decision on it in October 1978 (5).

The plan's major objectives were threefold:

- to turn Euronet into a public operational on-line information network;
- to develop a market for scientific and technical information within the Community;
- to promote technology and methodology for improving information services, with special emphasis on improving those of Euronet.

A total budget of 9.5 million European units of account (EUA) was allocated to the plan by the Council.

2.1. Turning Euronet into an operational network

The Euronet information network has now become known as Euronet DIANE, since the network contains two basic elements:

- Euronet, the Community-wide data transmission network, built by the Community postal and telecommunications administrations (PTTs), and
- DIANE (Direct Information Access Network for Europe), a group of host information services offering their data bases for access via Euronet.

2.1.1. On 13 February 1980, Euronet DIANE was officially inaugurated in Strasbourg by Mme Simone Veil, President of the European Parliament, in the presence of Mr. Roy Jenkins, the then President of the Commission of the European Communities, and Mr. Vittorino Colombo, Italian PTT Minister and President in Office of the Council of Ministers.

Needless to say, an enormous amount of preparatory work had been carried out at Community level during 1978 and 1979, and throughout this period, the Committee has advised the Commission closely on all aspects of the network's implementation.

(4) CREST: Committee for Scientific and Technical Research.

(5) Official Journal L 311 of 4 November 1978.

- 2.1.2. In March 1978, the Commission decided, on the advice of the Committee, to set up a small team of professionals, called the "Launch Team" (6), to ensure, during the launching period of the network, effective coordination of the various day-to-day implementation and operational aspects. The Team was, however, set up on the understanding that, eventually, it would be replaced by some form of association of the Euronet DIANE host services themselves.
- 2.1.3. In March 1979, the Committee endorsed the medium- and long-term development plans put forward by the Community PTTs for upgrading the technical features of the telecommunications network, e.g. new CCITT standards for interconnection with other networks, terminal interface work, and for preparing the transition of Euronet into a public operational on-line information network by the end of 1983 at the latest.
- 2.1.4. During discussions with PTT representatives in November 1979, the Committee learned that, following provisional acceptance of the network in July 1979, free use of the international network would be offered to users during the pre-operational phase starting mid-November 1979 and in anticipation of commercial opening in April 1980.
- 2.1.5. There are now (end 1980) some 15 host information services connected to the DIANE network and providing on-line access to over 150 data banks and bases, with a further 27 hosts planning to connect and over 1,000 regular users of these services have been recorded (7). It should be noted that, whilst the Commission sponsors Euronet DIANE, the hosts are entirely independent and are responsible individually for the services they offer. However, all DIANE hosts have signed a "memorandum of understanding" with the Commission, which refers to the Treaty of Rome principles of free competition and non-discrimination towards users.
- 2.1.6. With its entry into the Community on 1 January 1981, Greece is automatically entitled to the extension of Euronet to its territory. The technical questions involved are being resolved by the PTTs and connection will thus ensure for Greece the equal rights and obligations of a Community Member State in the field of on-line information.

(6) For more information on the Launch Team's activities, write to Euronet DIANE Launch Team, 15, avenue de la Faïencerie, Luxembourg.

(7) In August 1981, the number of hosts connected had risen to 26, offering access to some 260 data bases to around 2,000 users.

- 2.1.7. Article 3 of the Council decision on the 2nd plan of action lays down the basis and conditions for the extension of Euronet to non-Community countries. Any such extension is implemented by means of a cooperation agreement.

In response to an official request to the Commission from Switzerland for connection to Euronet, the Committee gave its initial advice to the Commission in December 1977, with especial attention to any policy matters involved.

On the basis of further advice from the Committee in October 1978, the Commission continued negotiations with Switzerland and, following the Committee's favourable opinion on these negotiations, a cooperation agreement was concluded in September 1979 by an exchange of letters. The inauguration of the Swiss node and its connection to Euronet took place in November 1980.

In October 1980, the Committee also gave a favourable opinion on the negotiations with Sweden for a similar cooperation agreement, the conclusion of which is expected by mid 1981.

The Committee has already been informed by the Commission that Austria, Spain and possibly other countries wish to open negotiations for connection to Euronet. As in the case of Switzerland and Sweden, the Committee will be asked to give its opinion to the Commission on the proposed conclusion of any further cooperation agreements.

2.2. Developing an information market within the Community

The aim of this chapter of the plan was to stimulate the development of a genuine, prosperous and healthy Community information market, with the central attention being the interests of the user.

- 2.2.1. Both the Committee and the Commission recognised, right from the beginning, that, if Euronet DIANE was to be a success, every effort would have to be made to ensure that the end-user received proper and efficient service.

In June 1978, it was agreed that a preliminary study be carried out to assess the full range of possible user needs. At the same time, it was decided to set up an ad hoc group to examine, on the basis of the study, all aspects of user relations with the primary aim of making a qualitative assessment of the market for information in Europe. The group was also asked to propose a possible policy for user support actions.

Whilst the Committee acknowledged that there should be some mechanism for responding to the needs of the end-user, it came to the conclusion in November 1979 that the ad hoc group's proposals did not warrant the setting up of a permanent group. Instead the Committee decided to delegate representatives to interact with the Commission's own User Forum and report back as appropriate.

2.2.3. Whilst the promotion and sale of specific services offered by a given Euronet DIANE host operator have been the direct responsibility of that operator, the Commission, in close consultation with the Committee, has directed major attention to giving active support to the hosts' promotional activities in the following areas:

- market research (identification of potential trans-border user groups);
- public relations, participation at trade fairs and the like (in conjunction with the PTTs);
- preparation of basic literature (e.g. brochures) for promoting the overall network;
- market analysis (Euronet share of overall market, trends);
- liaison with hosts, especially during the launch period of the network.

2.2.4. As part of the effort to establish on-line data banks on Euronet DIANE, the Committee has examined and approved various projects in each sector of interest covered by working groups (agriculture, biomedicine and health care, environment).

2.2.5. In March 1979, the Committee welcomed proposals from the Commission for the creation of a prosperous European information industry and market aimed at achieving a better and freer flow of information within Europe.

It was recognised that a new mechanism was needed to develop better value-added information systems or services, which would also extend to areas beyond the Committee's present sectors. The Committee therefore decided to set up a task force to try and find such a suitable mechanism and, at the same time, to investigate further the whole subject area of a European information industry. For the latter, the task force recommended only carrying out, within the 2nd plan of action, a limited number of preliminary studies.

- 2.2.6. On the basis of the task force's recommendations, the Committee was able to conclude that the most appropriate mechanism for stimulating the creation of new information services was a "call for proposals", which was published in November 1979 (8).

The Committee has played a close and important part in advising the Commission on the procedure to be followed and on the criteria and priorities to be applied to the selection of proposals for the Community's financial support. A specially enlarged Bureau meeting was held in April 1980 for this purpose.

The Committee, together with its working groups, has also assisted the Commission in evaluating the numerous proposals. A Committee Evaluation Board was set up to evaluate some 65 proposals submitted by the Commission out of the 266 that were originally received in response to the "call". The Committee later considered the Board's evaluation of these proposals and gave its formal opinion and recommendations to the Commission in July 1980 as to which proposals should be supported. The Committee was then informed, in October, of the findings of the Commission's own selection committee (composed of representatives from several of its interested services).

Initially a budget of 1 million EUA had been recommended by the Committee for allocation to the "call for proposals". In view of the number of proposals the Committee's majority agreed that this budget should be increased to 1.8 million EUA. With this sum the Community would be able to finance a quarter of the expenditure earmarked for the development of selected proposals, spread over a period of twelve months.

The areas covered are extremely varied, ranging from health problems through energy conservation, business information, agriculture, the environment, shipbuilding and electronics to new technologies. Contracts with 13 organisations have since been signed.

2.3. Promotion of information technologies

In accordance with the Council resolution of 24 June 1971 which called for coordination among the Member States with regard to technological progress in the field of the science and processing of documentation, this part of the action plan was aimed primarily at building on certain important work already under way and at ensuring that user interests were safeguarded in the context of emerging technological developments.

(8) Official Journal C 298 of 29 November 1979.

- 2.3.1. In March 1979, the Commission submitted proposals to the Committee for a new programme in support of the application of new technologies for information transfer. The Commission had earlier financed a study on Videotex (9) compatibility with Euronet and had launched a number of studies dealing with the Videotex technology. The results of these studies were presented at a Videotex Conference, which was held by the Commission in June 1979.
- 2.3.2. At its summer 1979 meeting, the Committee recommended to the Commission to set up a task force, under the aegis of its working group ETAG, to help define the areas of Committee competence in the field of application of new information technologies, e.g. facsimile, electronic mail, fibre optics, video cassettes and discs, satellites. Particular reference was also to be made to the findings of the Videotex Conference.

The task force presented its recommendations to the Committee in March 1980. These recommendations were broadly endorsed and were considered by the Committee to be an important basis for work in this field in a 3rd plan of action (see section 4).

- 2.3.3. A workshop on the application of Videotex to information on agriculture was held in February 1980, the results of which were thought by the Committee to be encouraging for further investigation. A similar workshop was also held on energy savings in September 1980.
- 2.3.4. An exhibition/workshop was held in December 1980 on the electronic delivery of primary documents. The workshop's conclusions and recommendations are now being considered by the Committee.
- 2.3.5. A sub-committee for new information technologies has been set up by CREST. It has been agreed that the ETAG working group should work closely with the sub-committee in this area of activity.
- 2.3.6. General aspects of concern for the Committee in promoting information technologies have been:
- standardisation of technical interfaces for Euronet host computers and terminals (in cooperation with the PTTs);
 - implementation of a common command language for Euronet;

(9) Videotex is a technology which allows computer-stored information to be requested by telephone and reproduced on the screen of an ordinary TV set fitted with a decoder and, for interactive videotex, with a keyboard.

- standards for information exchange;
- promotion of information exchange on information technology;
- multilingual tools for scientific and technical information.

2.3.7. Multilingual tools were an integral part of the 1st plan of action, but as the field of development expanded into more general areas, a separate multilingual programme (10) was decided upon by the Commission (1977-79). This has since been followed by a second multilingual programme (1980-82).

However, the Committee wished to continue to be associated with STID aspects of policies and applications in the multilingual field and provision was therefore made in the 2nd action plan for some specifically STID-related work such as multilingual vocabularies and thesauri.

In particular, the Committee has been called upon by CREST to give an opinion on the technical feasibility, management and timeliness of the EUROTRA project (11).

2.4. Streamlining of the Committee's working methods

2.4.1. In order to be able to meet the requirements of the new tasks given to it by the Council decision of 9 October 1978, and in particular its Annex II, the Committee considered it appropriate to review its Standing Orders. Initial discussions took place on drawing up rules of procedure as specifically required in the Council decision, entrusting the Committee with the role of an Advisory Committee on Programme Management (ACPM) for the implementation of the 2nd action plan. Both the proposed new Standing Orders and rules of procedure, including comments on them received from the delegations, were first referred to the Committee's ad hoc group for legal aspects and to the Commission's legal service. After agreement by the Commission, the Committee was able to adopt the new Standing Orders and rules of procedure in June 1979.

2.4.2. In respect of the requirement in Annex II of the Council decision to give opinions to the Commission on the optimum execution of the 2nd plan of action, the Committee has given 52 such opinions on project work and 6 opinions of a more general nature. All these opinions have also been forwarded to the Council, whilst the general opinions have also been submitted to CREST.

(10) "Improvement of the transfer of information between European languages".

Advice on the implementation of these programmes is given to the Commission by a committee of experts called CETIL, with whom the Committee has already developed close links.

(11) EUROTRA is a five-year plan to develop an automated system for the translation of Community languages, proposed by the Commission to the Council.

- 2.4.3 In view of its enlarged tasks, the Committee had also deemed it necessary to streamline its activities in order to achieve optimum utilisation of the resources available. Indeed, following discussions on strategy alternatives, the Committee had already taken various decisions, in 1978, on its internal structure.

The Standing Group was replaced by a Bureau, whose four members would have the following responsibilities:

Chairman: contacts with the delegations, the Commission and CREST, and representing the Committee whenever necessary;

Vice-Chairman: questions related to the technical implementation of the network, and especially monitoring ETAG's activities, including new technical developments;

Vice-Chairman: monitoring of all horizontal activities (e.g. management, marketing, legal aspects, multilingual aspects, training and user interface, with particular reference to industry);

Vice-Chairman: monitoring and coordination of all sectoral activities.

The Bureau was thus able to coordinate all activities to be carried out under the three chapters of the 2nd action plan. It also was asked to prepare with the Commission the Committee's plenary meetings.

In accordance with its Standing Orders, a new Bureau was elected in March 1978 for an initial term of office of two years. The officers elected were Mr. Martin Cremer (F.R. Germany) as Chairman and Mr. Jacques Michel (France), Mr. Willem Renaud (Netherlands) and Mr. Gerald Sweeney (Ireland) as Vice-Chairmen. They were re-elected in March 1980 for a further year of office.

- 2.4.4. With regard to working groups to support both the Committee and the Commission, it was decided, in October 1978, to dissolve all existing groups and to create the following new permanent groups:

- economic and technical aspects of Euronet's development (ETAG);
- multilingual aspects of STID (MULTI);
- information on agriculture (AWG);
- information on biomedicine and health care (BWG);
- information on the environment (ENIG).

In addition, the Committee decided to maintain the ad hoc group for legal aspects of STID to examine problems on a case-by-case basis. It was also at this time that

the user relations task force was set up but was then disbanded, in November 1979, for not being the right mechanism to respond to user needs.

The Committee itself appointed a chairman to each group, leaving it to the groups to elect two vice-chairmen each.

- 2.4.5. The Committee also approved, in October 1978, the broad outlines of the proposed policies and medium-term working programmes of the new groups and gave them mandate to advise the Commission on preparing projects for subsequent recommendation by the Committee in accordance with Annex II of the Council decision on the 2nd action plan.
- 2.4.6. The future orientation of the WGs' activities is currently under discussion, with a view to bringing them into line with the proposed objectives of a 3rd action plan (see section 4).

On the basis of discussions held in November 1980 between CIDST's Bureau and the WG Chairmen, CIDST was able to reach the following preliminary conclusions:

- WGs should be given greater responsibility, especially in recommending policy, as a mark of which each WG programme could be given a certain budget envelope;
- the mapping out of gaps and growing points was an important element in determining WG programmes;
- there should be better information on national programmes at the Community level;
- the "call for proposals" procedure should be used in a controlled way, with each sectoral area in need of support being clearly defined;
- CIDST should give consideration to widening its interest to other sectors, e.g. energy;
- the coordination of the future orientation drive should be developed by CIDST's Bureau, together with the WG Bureaux.

2.5. International and interinstitutional cooperation

- 2.5.1. The Committee approved, in October 1980, proposals for areas of cooperation with NORDINFO (12) as a result of contacts the Chairman and Secretary had had with NORDINFO representatives in December 1979. The Committee's Bureau then met with the NORDINFO representatives in January 1981 in Denmark and had a first exchange of views on areas of common interest for future cooperation.

(12) NORDINFO: Nordic Council for Scientific Information and Research Libraries consisting of representatives from Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.

2.5.2. Information and views have been exchanged on the following international meetings:

- OECD High Level Conferences;
- UNESCO meeting of Ministers of Science Policy;
- Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (Madrid);
- Intergovernmental Council of UNESCO's General Information Programme;
- UNISIST II Conference;
- United Nations Conference on Science and Technology for Development;
- UNESCO General Conference (XXIst).

It should be noted that the Community countries held a preparatory meeting before the UNISIST II Conference, held in May 1979. A resolution was adopted at this meeting and supported by all Community Member States at that Conference. A similar preparatory meeting took place in Paris, in September 1980 before the UNESCO General Conference.

2.5.3. One of the Committee's Vice-Chairmen participates regularly in the work of the Council of Ministers' "Legal Informatics" group and reports to the Committee accordingly.

3. Working Group Activities

3.1. Economic and technical aspects of Euronet's development (ETAG)

From September 1978 onwards ETAG was chaired by Mr. NICHOLAS (UK).

In parallel with the traditional ETAG activities in the fields of:

- network and interface development,
- promoting of the telecommunications network and of the information services available on Euronet,
- user support,

new specific topics, such as Euronet Launch Team activities and the New Information Technologies, played an important part in ETAG's work and discussions. In addition, several activities, already initiated in ETAG's first year of activity under the three major headings mentioned before, made considerable progress, and in particular:

- the Standard Command Set,
- Document Delivery and Ordering,
- the Euronet Enquiry Service.

These specific actions are characterised by their interlinking and relationship with the technological aspects (design, analysis and implementation of technical solutions), the promotional aspects of the network and of the information services (market analysis and increase of the user market) and the user aspects (fulfilling of user needs and requirements).

3.1.1. Technical Projects

The period was highlighted by ETAG's follow-up of the implementation of the telecommunications network, connecting some 20 host computers and monitoring the first months of the life of Euronet DIANE from the technical point of view. This implied the successful completion of a number of technical projects resulting in prototypes of connection adaptors, interface machines, conversion software. Concurrently ETAG finalized its policy on prototype and test implementations in launching the implementation of a remote printing service on Euronet.

Despite efficient and rapid work by the Task Force "Application of New Information Technologies", only limited actions in this field have been pursued.

3.1.2. Promotion Projects

During the 3 year period considered, a series of promotional programmes for Euronet DIANE was designed and implemented, during the pre-launch and launch phases of the network. The delays in start-up operations on the telecommunications network led to the Euronet pre-launch promotional programme being extended for a period of 6 months. This was intended to maintain the momentum created around Euronet DIANE by the pre-launch promotional programme and to fill the gap between the pre-launch and the launch periods. Continuity in the promotional effort was ensured by the launch promotional programme, the keystone of which was the official opening of Euronet DIANE in the European Parliament, which had a great impact on the Members of the Parliament and on the media. The objectives after this major event have been to maintain the impact created after the European launch and to carry out necessary follow-up actions in the Member States.

To ensure the economic viability of the DIANE community, preliminary consideration has been given to the benefits of an information export initiative to North America.

3.1.3. User-Orientated Projects

ETAG has followed up actions initiated in the past and related to the development of Euronet user support features. Some specific key actions corresponding to real user requirements and promoting user aids for the Euronet DIANE community have been speeded up and/or continued in relation with the Euronet DIANE operations of the Launch Team and the Euronet Enquiry Service.

Since no general policy in the field of user relations has been defined by CIDST, the Launch Team in conjunction with ETAG took pragmatic initiatives to simplify the daily life of Euronet DIANE users and to set up and maintain contact with them.

Finally, a new set of projects related to document delivery and ordering has been launched to answer a number of technical/economic questions related to the feasibility of an electronic system and to collect information and data on the document supply process. Follow-up actions foreseen would comprise demonstrations of existing services and system and test-bed and pilot implementations of an electronic document storage and transmission system.

3.2. Multilingual aspects of STID (MULTI)

The inaugural meeting of the CIDST working group on multilingual aspects of STID was held on 5 July 1978, since which the group MULTI's chairman has been Mr. HENNICO (B).

On the basis of its terms of reference established in March 1978 and work programme drawn up in May 1979, the following projects and actions were carried out or initiated:

3.2.1. Multilingual thesauri

- i) The project for the AGROVOC thesaurus (see also 3.3.1.3) was executed by the Commission and FAO. AGROVOC covers the AGRIS scope and exists in five languages: English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. It contains about 8,600 descriptors, whilst the number of non-descriptors ranges from about 3,700 to 9,300 depending on the language version.

The first edition of AGROVOC will be published during the last quarter of 1981 after an extensive testing period.
- ii) Preparations were made for drawing up a contract for work on a trilingual thesaurus on polymers. The main difficulty during the preparatory phase was to ensure the financial contribution to this project by the Member States involved.
- iii) Some preparatory work has been carried out on a multilingual thesaurus on technical aids for the aged and disabled (see also 3.4.2.8). The next step to be undertaken is to find an appropriate contractor. The Biomedical Working Group will be involved in the future activities of this project.



- iv) Basic work for a cooperative development of the EUDISED thesaurus has been undertaken.

The purpose of the project is the creation of a second edition of the EUDISED thesaurus as an optimal tool for the exploitation of the EUDISED R&D data base and the EURYDICE information network (13).

The Council of Europe and the Commission have agreed to share the cost of the operation, each taking responsibility for a number of well-defined activities.

- v) Multilingual thesauri were developed and will be developed by a number of organizations, but the maintenance problem, including terminology control, has not yet been solved. In view of this unsatisfactory situation, the Commission has entrusted a contractor with the implementation of an adequate infrastructure for the maintenance of multilingual thesauri. The ASTUTE software package, which was developed by DG XIII, is used for this purpose. Maintenance and updating operations had a successful start for the AGRITERM thesauri.
- vi) Initial work for launching a preparatory study for a thesaurus data base on Euronet DIANE has been carried out. The thesaurus data base itself will be an excellent information source for several categories of users. It will guide the common user to find the appropriate retrieval tool, it will provide useful information to potential thesaurus designers, and it will prevent unnecessary duplication in thesaurus development.

3.2.2. SYSTRAN

Some preparatory work for the implementation of SYSTRAN on Euronet has taken place. The purpose of this project is to make possible the on-request translation of titles and abstracts retrieved during a search in some Euronet DIANE data base. The project is to create the necessary computational environment for such a service.

3.2.3. Call for proposals

The Groups was involved in the evaluation of proposals in the multilingual field.

3.2.4. Future orientation of activities

The MULTI WG has prepared an initial draft policy outline for action in the STID multilingual field. The document is currently being studied by CIDST.

It is intended to continue the multilingual thesauri and SYSTRAN projects.

(13) EURYDICE is the Education Information Network in the European Community.

A new macrothesaurus called EUROVOC is also envisaged. It should be produced by the converging efforts of the European institutions and the Parliaments of the Member States to facilitate the information flow within and between the institutions of the Community and its Member States.

3.3. Information on agriculture (AWG)

AWG was set up by the IDST group (predecessor of CIDST) of CREST in 1969. Its members are appointed by the governments of the EC member countries through CIDST delegations.

As a rule, AWG is composed of two experts per country, one from the Ministry of Agriculture and one from a leading agricultural information and documentation centre.

During the reference period, Dott. D'AMBROSIO (Italy) was chairman and Dr. SCHUETZSACK (F.R.Germany) and Mr. BRUGGEMANS (Belgium) vice-chairmen of AWG.

D.G. VI, Agriculture, is also represented in AWG, and AWG's working programme is developed and carried out in agreement with D.G. VI.

3.3.1. Main achievements under 2nd action plan

A number of projects were proposed, together with priorities defined, in AWG's working plan of 1977, most of which are completed, on-going or started in the meantime:

- the consolidation of previously started systems, such as AGREP (Permanent Inventory of Agricultural Research Projects) and EUR-AGRIS (EC contribution to the world agricultural bibliography AGRIS),
- the implementation of value-added information services and
- the development of appropriate user support.

3.3.1.1. Information systems

i) EUR-AGRIS

There has been a steady annual rise in the numbers of citations contributed since the project started. The EUR-AGRIS contributions to AGRIS in the reference period were: 1978, 28,129 citations; 1979, 30,917 citations and 1980, 37,265 citations. This was approximately 24 % of the total contribution to AGRIS.

At present 3 members contribute abstracts. The language of the majority of the 12 % of the total EUR-AGRIS contribution that have abstracts has been in English, but French, German and Italian are also used.

Besides the provision of the joint EC input to AGRIS, EUR-AGRIS tries to meet specific needs of European users whilst respecting compatibility with the overall system. To this end, a range of actions were undertaken, e.g.

- in 1980, AGRIS was made available on-line on Euronet DIANE, whose hosts are SPIDEL (Paris), DATACENTRALEN (Copenhagen), and DIMDI Cologne);
- proposals for the coverage of extension material (including films, slides, audio-visual material, etc.) are in preparation. A pilot test is proposed for 1981.

EUR-AGRIS is managed in close cooperation with FAO, the sponsor of AGRIS.

ii) Animal Disease Occurrence (ADO)

ADO is an information analysis service on disease occurrence and its cost in animals where it is of importance in or relevant to EC countries. The information collected is presented in the form of expanded abstracts and tables in which numerical and other factual data are arranged. The data base is published twice a year. It started operation in 1980. The first two issues contained 220 abstracts. ADO is a joint venture of the Commission and the Commonwealth Agricultural Bureaux (CAB).

iii) Survey of agricultural information systems in the European Community

A first "Survey of the World Agricultural Documentation Services" was compiled in 1972/73. Contrary to the first survey, the second one covers bibliographic data bases and factual data banks. Data collection and analysis are under way.

3.3.1.2. User interaction and application of new information technology

i) Pilot training course for on-line use of agricultural information systems

The course was to introduce agricultural librarians and information officers from the Member countries to the on-line use of computerized information systems, including bibliographical data bases and factual data banks in agriculture and related fields. It was organised on behalf of the Commission with the assistance of DIMDI (Deutsches Institut für Medizinische Dokumentation und Information) in Cologne from 10 to 14 December 1979. 45 agricultural information experts from 8 Member countries and EC institutions attended.

As a follow-up action to the training course in Cologne, an instructors' guide is being compiled, which will facilitate organisation of similar on-line courses.

ii) STID support for the establishment of an action plan implementing Council Decision 78/902/EEC on joint research programmes in agriculture

Under this heading some 30 special bibliographies have so far been compiled on questions related to the research programmes mentioned above. About 30 further bibliographies and an analytical report are still in preparation.

iii) VIDEOTEX in agriculture

In the framework of CIDST's programme on new information technologies a study is being carried out on the relevance of the VIDEOTEX technology, its present state of readiness and the suitability of its application to agriculture. Both AWG and ETAG are advising the Commission on this project.

3.3.1.3 Multilingual thesauri

Multilingual thesauri were compiled in three sub-fields of agriculture: veterinary science, food science and technology, and agricultural economics and rural sociology.

The three thesauri were published by K.G. Saur Verlag in 1979. An updating procedure was agreed for 1981.

AGROVOC - Thesaurus for agriculture

A hierarchically structured controlled vocabulary on agriculture and related fields was compiled jointly by the Commission and FAO, as well as CAB, France, Germany, Italy and IDRC (International Development Research Centre, Canada) in 1979 and 1980. AGROVOC contains about 9,000 descriptors and roughly the same number of related terms in each of the languages covered, i.e. in English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

The thesaurus is being tested at present. The first issue is expected to be published late 1981. The Commission was advised on AGROVOC by CIDST's MULTI WG and AWG.

3.3.1.4 Call for proposals

AWG participated actively in the evaluation of proposals received in the framework of the first call for proposals.

3.3.2. Future activities

With a view to outlining possible future activities by AWG, information needs of the Community in agriculture, i.e. plant production and health, animal production and health, and concerning specific information for agricultural advisory services were identified by AWG members and outside specialists.

The findings of this preparatory discussion are summarized in the discussion paper "Some information needs of the European Community in selected fields of agriculture". As appendix to this discussion paper, there are reports by AWG members on the situation of agricultural information in the EC Member countries. Both the discussion paper and the national reports will serve, after thorough discussion by a large population of potential users, as a basis for the definition of a medium-term working programme.

3.4. Information on biomedicine and health care (BWG)

During the period under review the group was chaired by Mr. REICHERTZ (FRG) and Mr. ROUKENS (NL) respectively. The 2 vice-chairmen were Mrs. WOLFF-TERROINE (F) and Mr. MASON (UK).

The mandate for the CIDST Working Group originally entitled "Biomedical Information" was issued on 17 December 1973.

In 1978, CIDST agreed to expand the WG title to "Information on Biomedicine and Health Care", which fitted better both the scope as set out in the mandate and the views of all BWG members.

A very important interpretation of the mandate was given in the Policy Paper of BWG drawn up in 1978 and agreed in principle by CIDST as a general orientation for the medium term. The Policy Paper was considered by BWG as a very useful executive guide, which should be updated regularly.

3.4.1. Implementation of mandate

The 2nd and the proposed 3rd Action Plans played a large part in the discussions on the interpretation of the mandate:

- . The 2nd Action Plan urged BWG to place emphasis on the identification and initiation of factual and bibliographical data banks, if possible to be connected to Euronet.
- . The 2nd and 3rd Action Plans urged BWG to find a balance between actions initiated by the BWG or the Commission and actions initiated from outside the Community organizations, e.g. by industry.

Several projects initiated by BWG, some of which were started before 1977, aimed at implementing actions and research work in all or almost all EC Member States. This meant in fact the identification of national centres in specified areas, the definition of rules for cooperation, and possibly guiding the operationalization of the joint set-up.

3.4.2. Project work

3.4.2.1 Drug data banks (BM 1)

The BWG decision to recommend a coordinated activity in the field of information on drugs dates back to the early days of BWG's existence.

Two studies were executed and finalized in 1979:

- manual exchange formats between centres and a User Guide (project BM 1A),
- computerized exchange formats between centres (project BM 1 B).

The studies were accepted by the Project Advisory Board of BM 1, consisting of representatives from the Drug Centres of BIAM (France), KNMP (Netherlands), Dept. of Health Belgium, Dept. of Health Italy, DIMDI (FRG) and Rote Liste (FRG). BWG also accepted the reports.

In September 1979 the Commission decided that a sufficient number of Centres should sign an agreement, a so-called "Memorandum of Understanding", with the Commission, before follow-up studies could be financed. With the exception of the Italian Dept. of Health, the centres were not prepared to sign this document. The main reason seemed that problems of confidentiality and user group definition, tariffs and financing were not sufficiently clarified. In January 1980 another meeting with representatives of the centres was held, in which the major policy issues regarding identification of user groups, connection to Euronet and responsibilities of the centres in relation to Commission responsibilities were settled. Conclusions of this meeting were summarized in a "Code of Practice" to be signed by the Centres. Two Centres have as yet signed, BIAM and the Italian Dept. of Health. Three others have indicated that they will do so when a number of technical questions are resolved.

Complicating the BM 1 project during 1980 were two facts:

- i) the acceptance, under the "Call for Proposals", of a proposal to set up an on-line data bank on drugs and a related project, and
- ii) the budgetary restrictions of DG XIII.

As a consequence of the unclear situation, the Commission proposed to set up a relatively small study to clarify the situation in relation to the Drug Centres, particularly with respect to the technical aspects of connecting the data banks of these centres to Euronet. This was accepted by the BWG by majority vote. This study might be started in 1981.

3.4.2.2 Terminology and biomedical metalanguages (BM 2).

Linguistic matters are only to be dealt with by the BWG in relation to projects that deal with particular fields of application of information systems. Consequently, the BM 2 project was defined in connection with the Drug data bank project (BM 1).

The initial phase of the study dealt with the nomenclature of the active ingredients of drugs and compiling a system matching the various nomenclatures actually in use (BM 2A).

Further work on BM 2 (machine-readable version) was delayed pending a decision on how BM 1 would be continued.

3.4.2.3 Minimum basic data set (BM 3)

The work by the consultant was completed in 1980. The final report, "Review of the availability and comparability of the Minimum Basic Data Set (MBDS) in the EEC", was accepted.

The study is confined to hospitals. Its main conclusions are that:

- hospital information systems in use or under development should contain at least the minimum basic data set;
- the sets in use should be made uniform, both to serve the needs of multiple users reliably and to make possible statistics at a level higher than the institutional;
- in order to motivate the primary suppliers of the information, i.e. the medical doctors, any system containing MBDS should seek to be useful to these groups;
- a clearing house of MBDS hospitals should be set up by the EEC, and the EEC should organize a workshop to evaluate the results of this study.

It was decided that continuation of the work in the area of MBDS, particularly practical studies aimed at the implementation of the recommendations, should be done under the responsibility of other committees and DGs, with BWG and DG XIII support. For the workshop proposed, the lead is being taken by DG XII (Research, Science and Education) and the CREST's Medical Research Committee (CRM), together with its groups "Epidemiology" and "Health Services Research".

Preparations for the workshop are well under way. It will be held in Brussels, September 1981, and co-sponsored by the Commission, the World Health Organisation (European Office) and the International Medical Informatics Association. The title of the workshop is:

- Hospital Statistics for population-based Health Care and Epidemiology.

3.4.2.4 Permanent inventory of ongoing biomedical research (BM 4)

The aims of this project are to establish an information system about ongoing research and development projects in the EC countries, that are financed out of public funds. The users of such an information system are research workers planning their ongoing or future research, and administrators who are responsible for the management and financing of research and development.

A study about the technical and financial requirements for the establishment of a permanent inventory on on-going research in the biomedical field within the Member States of the European Communities resulted in a final report in April 1979. The report was accepted.

At present, the BWG delegations are in the process of consulting their national institutions for information and support. Discussion is also taking place about the definition of a pilot experiment.

3.4.2.5 Industrial medicine data bank (BM 5)

At the request of DG V (Employment and Social Affairs, Dept. for Industrial Medicine and Hygiene), BWG has studied the possibility of setting up an information and documentation system on industrial medicine. The investigations were largely based on the EURISIM project being conducted in Bielefeld (FRG). After many external meetings and internal discussions, the BWG decided to postpone further discussions until the sector of industrial medicine itself could issue a documented recommendation for an EC project in this area.

3.4.2.6 Information system on cancer research (BM 6)

At the request of DG XII and CRM, the BWG studied the proposal for a Data Bank of the European Organisation for Research and Treatment of Cancer (EORTC). BWG had no objections to the proposals from a scientific or technical point of view, taking also into account the positive recommendation of DG XII and CRM. However, the decision to sponsor the Data Centre of EORTC as a BWG project, to be financed under the 2nd Action Plan STID budget, was very strictly conditioned, because the BWG felt that this was an extraordinary project in relation to the BWG mandate.

3.4.2.7 Inventory of existing information systems (BM 7)

In support of the general STID policies to strengthen the European information market and to connect data banks to Euro-net, the BWG proposed in February 1980 to support a request to CIDST for the establishment of an inventory of available information systems on Biomedicine and Health Care in the EC countries.

At the present stage, the project is under preparation and should start in 1981.

3.4.2.8 Information for the aged and disabled (BM 8)

The BWG recommended, in May 1980, that DG XIII should undertake actions to support the EC programmes aimed at innovation in the area of tools and technical aids for aged and disabled persons, and the development of improved information systems in this field. These programmes are in general support of world-wide actions to be taken in the "International Year of the Disabled, 1981".

BWG's contribution to this work is concentrated on two areas:

- definition study for such an information system (BM 8),
- possible establishment of a multilingual thesaurus on technical aids for the disabled (TH 34).

3.4.2.9 European Journal for medical effectiveness (BM 9)

Within the context of a programme to establish information and documentation in support of cost containment in health care, particularly hospital care, the BWG advised as a first action the establishment of a European Journal of medical effectiveness and cost containment in health care.

The aim of the journal is to disseminate authoritative information about methods of health care that are medically effective, socially acceptable and cost effective. The categories of readers aimed at are health service managers and health care professionals in EC Member States.

It is envisaged that authoritative review articles will be a main constituent of the Journal. References to other journals, seminars and congresses will also be included.

It is expected that the first volume will be issued in 1982.

3.4.3. Call for Proposals (CfP)

In the framework of the first call for proposals issued in 1979, five projects were eventually selected for support within the CfP procedure and are concerned with:

- drug information system,
- drug nomenclature information,
- information system on hospital equipment,
- information on laboratory materials and technologies,
- information on ergonomics.

3.4.4. Future actions

BWG intends to undertake a certain number of new actions which are different by nature but which are likely to contribute either directly or indirectly to the establishment, exploitation or proper functioning of information systems in the field of biomedicine and health care.

BWG is of the opinion that any development in biomedical information must take account of existing activities, not only at national and international levels but also at the Community level itself. This would entail, amongst other things, the preparation of "national reports" and the regular updating of BWG's Policy paper.

3.5. Information on the environment (ENIG)

In accordance with the terms of reference given to ENIG by CIDST early in 1979, the Group has expanded its coverage from environmental protection to environment. The Group has given priority to the projects initiated on the basis of the first and second action plans for STID and to projects mentioned in the second action programme for the environment. The Group has also been involved in the "call for proposals" activity and the development of projects that have emerged from the demand to have easy information access to environmental legislation and information on waste and recycling.

Representatives of DG XII and the Commission's Environment Service have contributed to the group's work.

ENIG's Bureau was composed of Mr. SAND (Denmark), chairman, and Messrs. DE LAVIETER (Netherlands) and DOOMS (Belgium), vice-chairmen.

3.5.1 Inventories

The activities concerning the environmental inventories are based on the decision of the Council of the European Communities of December 1975 (14). This decision requires that information be collected on:

- a. scientific and technical information and documentation centres and services (ENDOC);
- b. specialist centres and independent experts (ENEX);
- c. current or scheduled research projects (ENREP).

The first data for the ENDOC file were collected in 1978, and printed in a directory in 1978. The printed directory is composed of a main list and indexes.

In December 1980 the ENDOC file contained 519 sources.

The information for ENREP was first collected in 1976. In December 1980 the ENREP file contained 17006 sources (projects).

The collection of ENEX data gave rise to problems in certain Member countries which have legislation requiring the protection of personal information. A collection of information in connection with that for ENDOC and ENREP has been set up.

A Merged Descriptor System (MDS) containing some 1,500 terms, subdivided into 20 classes, has been created.

ENIG will concentrate its attention on improving and promoting the ENDOC, ENREP and ENEX.

The Greek language will have to be introduced into the MDS.

(14) Official Journal L 31/8 of 5 February 1976.

3.5.2 ENGUIDE

In 1980 ENGUIDE (Guide to Bibliographic Data Bases for Users of Environmental Information) was published. This guide is a valuable tool for information providers and users.

3.5.3 ENLEX

A feasibility study has examined the possibility of collecting, analyzing and processing information on environmental legislation and a pilot project has been carried out in order to simulate real life operation and demonstrate possibilities of output exploitation.

3.5.4 EWADAT (Waste information system)

Two independent studies have established the need for having a system that could handle data on all types of waste and residues and their recycling.

3.5.5 National reports

In order to improve mutual information ENIG has started to collect information on ongoing and planned national activities related to its mandate. On the basis of reports from the Member States, it is intended that ENIG should assist in harmonizing at the conceptional stage of a given project.

3.5.6 Development of a data base containing European literature on the environment

Data from the ENREP programme could be a starting point for development of such a data base. In some Member countries a national collection of literature has already been established.

3.5.7 Coordination with other working groups of CIDST and the ACPM group of DG XII

Harmonisation of parallel activities in AWG and BWG is being implemented. It is also proposed that the Secretariats and representatives from the working groups form a more formal link with the project management group (ACPM) for the environmental research programme.

3.5.8 International cooperation

Cooperation with the United Nations' INFOTERRA (15) will be pursued.

(15) INFOTERRA is the International Referral System for Sources of Environmental Information.

4. 3rd three-year plan of action in the field of scientific and technical information and documentation (1981-83)

4.1. When, in March 1979, the Commission presented new programme proposals under the 2nd action plan for:

- the creation of a prosperous European information industry,
- information on technological innovation for industry (especially small- and medium-sized enterprises),
- the application of new technologies for information transfer.

its basic strategy was to improve significantly the information supply originating in Europe.

In its initial discussion, the Committee considered that these themes could well provide the foundations for a new approach for medium and long-term activities under a 3rd Action plan.

4.2. On the basis of the results of an informal meeting held in May 1979 in Noordwijk, the Committee discussed further the areas for possible action under a 3rd plan, and in November 1979, it considered the Commission's draft detailed proposals. It was also informed of the Commission's new policy paper, "European Society faced with the challenge of new information technologies: a Community response", prepared for the meeting of the Heads of State and of Government of the Member States, held in Dublin that same month.

It was then agreed that revised proposals would be presented for discussion at a special 2-day meeting in January 1980.

4.3. As a result of this special meeting, the Commission was able to present to the Committee, in March 1980, modified proposals.

After a particularly lengthy and complex discussion, there emerged a general consensus that the main objectives of a 3rd plan of action should be:

- i) consolidation and enhancement of the Euronet network and the extension and improvement of DIANE services;
- ii) creation of further high quality information services in Europe, especially by means of cooperation and/or concerted actions;
- iii) support of users and development of the market;
- iv) selective application of new technologies and methodologies for STID.

The Committee was of the opinion that the first two objectives should have priority for implementation and they should be complemented and supported by the other two objectives. The Committee also recommended that the duration of a 3rd plan should be 3 years.

The Committee further advised the Commission that the recommendations made by ETAG's task force, "New Information Technologies", should be considered for integration into the Commission's proposals concerning the last objective.

- 4.4. At its summer 1980 meeting, the Committee examined the Commission's further modified proposals. It was now able to agree to a draft Council decision on the plan and a draft opinion, which it later adopted by written procedure on 28 July 1980.

In particular, the Committee recommended, by majority vote, that the budget for the 3rd plan should be fixed at 16.5 million EUA, of which 6 million EUA should be set aside for the "call for proposals" procedure and follow-up actions in the context of the plan's 2nd objective. It was also recommended that 5 million EUA of the 6 million EUA proposed for the "call for proposals" and follow-up actions should not be committed before 1 January 1982, "so that improved and satisfactory selection criteria and procedures and appropriate cooperative mechanisms can be established". The Committee welcomed the Commission's declaration to respect this recommendation and is now working closely with the Commission on the establishment of these various criteria, procedures and mechanisms.

- 4.5. The Committee's opinion was forwarded in August 1980 to the Commission and to CREST, with a copy to the Council of Ministers. CREST made an initial examination of the draft plan in September in the presence of the Committee's Chairman.
- 4.6. The draft 3rd plan of action was formally adopted by the Commission and submitted to the Council for decision in October 1980.
- 4.7. At its October 1980 meeting, the Committee learned that specific reference to the "call for proposals" and the budgetary amount, as well as article 4 of the draft Council decision, had been deleted by the Commission for legal reasons. However, in response to the Committee's request for reinstatement, the Commission undertook formally to earmark 6 million EUA of the plan's total budget to the "call for proposals" and follow-up actions and not to use that amount before 1 January 1982 provided sufficient agreement was reached between the Committee and the Commission on procedure and selection criteria for the "call".
- 4.8. The Committee's request and the Commission's undertaking were made known to CREST at its October 1980 meeting when the draft plan was further discussed and the wording of an initial draft opinion by CREST agreed upon. The draft opinion was again discussed by CREST in December, and its opinion was finally submitted to the Commission and Council in February 1981.

- 4.9. Before adopting a final decision on the 3rd plan of action, the Council sought the opinions of the Economic and Social Committee and the European Parliament.

On 10 December 1980, the Economic and Social Committee gave a unanimously favourable opinion on the plan, emphasising, *inter alia*, that precautions must be taken to protect computer-stored confidential information relating to persons or companies.

The European Parliament has not yet been able to give its opinion since the plan is still being examined within the Parliament's competent committees (16).

(16) The Parliament's resolution was unanimously adopted on 7 May 1981, recommending to the Council a decision on the "3rd Action Plan in the field of information and documentation (1981-1983)". At the time of writing this report the Council's decision is still pending.

APPENDIX I

CIDST MEMBERSHIP LIST

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APPENDIX II

CIDST MEETINGS

1978 - 1980

1978

25th	28 February - 2 March
26th	14 - 16 June
27th	25 - 27 October

1979

28th	6 - 8 March
29th	26 - 28 June
30th	13 - 15 November

1980

31st (special)	21 + 22 January
32nd	25 - 27 March
33rd	24 - 26 June + 3 July
34th	21 - 23 October

European Communities — Commission

EUR 7658 — Fourth report on the activities of the Committee for Information and Documentation on Science and Technology of the European Communities (1978-80)

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The Committee's activities from 1978 to 1980 were concentrated principally on assisting the Commission in the implementation of the European Community's second three-year plan of action in the field of scientific and technical information and documentation (STID). One of the most memorable events during this period was the official inauguration, in February 1980, of the Community-wide information network Euronet-Diane.

Work, however, could not simply end with the completion of this plan. And so in order to continue and indeed to expand the Community's activities in the STID field the Committee agreed in 1980 to the Commission's proposals for carrying out a third three-year plan of action for the years 1981 to 1983.

The report is in four sections and deals with general information on the Committee, implementation of the second plan of action, working group activities, and proposals for a third three-year plan.

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